

omnibus package that will keep the government funded into next fall.

It was another extremely busy weekend for appropriators—the Members and their staffs. I was on the phone all day Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Every 10 minutes, another call with my colleagues, with the committees, and my staff—my great staff—who hardly slept this weekend to help finalize a deal.

Sunday night was the first night of Hanukkah, but, unfortunately, I had to spend 75 percent of that night on the phone with my colleagues and staff. My family, of course, was very understanding, and I appreciate that.

Sleep has been hard to come by for many who are part of the appropriations process. And while the world enjoyed a truly heart-stopping World Cup final, staff were on the clock working diligently to keep our government funded. I thank all of them for their great work.

Much of my focus today, tonight, and tomorrow will remain on getting the omnibus done. Despite having a little more work to do, the omnibus continues heading in the right direction. We must wrap the whole process up and vote on final passage before the end of the week.

It won't be easy, but we are working hard so we can get it done before the end of the week and be with our families for Christmas.

Once the omnibus comes before the Senate, I am confident that both sides will find things in it they can enthusiastically support. We all know the omnibus will be the best way to ensure kids, our veterans, our small businesses, and our military continue to have full access to vital services and programs they depend on.

It is not going to be everything anybody wants, that is for sure, but it is far preferable to a CR, which will leave the country high and dry. And it is certainly preferable to a government shutdown.

The omnibus will also allow the Senate to pass the Electoral Count Act into law, which my colleagues on the Rules Committee, Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUNT, have done great work on. And finalizing the omnibus is critical—absolutely critical—for supporting our friends in Ukraine and for fully implementing bipartisan bills like CHIPS and Science and the PACT Act and more.

So just as both parties cooperated on bipartisan achievements like CHIPS, gun safety, veterans' benefits, Respect for Marriage, and so much more, let's finish this session by passing an omnibus by working together in good faith.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, when the Biden administration put out their budget proposal, the Republicans knew it was literally wrong for the country. The administration wanted to cut funding for our Armed Forces, after inflation, while massively increasing spending on nondefense.

Republicans have taken the President's bizarre position and flipped it on its head. The bipartisan government funding bill that Senators LEAHY and SHELBY have finished negotiating does exactly the opposite of what the Biden administration first proposed. This bill provides a substantial real-dollar increase to the defense baseline and a substantial real-dollar cut to the non-defense, nonveterans baseline.

Let me say that again. President Biden wanted to cut defense spending and grow liberal domestic spending in real dollars, but Congress is rejecting the Biden administration's vision and doing the exact opposite. This bill will grow defense spending and cut non-defense, nonveterans spending after inflation.

Just last week, the Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act on an overwhelming bipartisan basis. Senators on both sides acknowledged that President Biden and his administration had failed—failed—to request the level of resources that our servicemembers and their commanders actually needed. So on a bipartisan basis, we ignored the administration's request and authorized what our Armed Forces actually need.

But the landmark investments in upgrading and modernizing our Armed Forces that we just laid out in the NDAA will not happen unless Congress follows through and appropriates the money to pay the bills. That is what Senators SHELBY and LEAHY have given us the opportunity to achieve: make good on our commitments in the NDAA by following through with actual funding.

Americans want our Nation to remain the preeminent global superpower. We want our country to remain the mightiest civilization the world has ever seen. We want to keep helping Ukraine, keep outcompeting Russia, and keep pace with the huge investments that China is making in their own military and new technologies.

So it is a strange position, to say the least, when Republicans in Congress have to poke and prod a Democratic Commander in Chief into sufficiently funding the men and women that he actually commands. But as I said all along, funding our Armed Forces is a basic governing duty. Republicans were not going to let our Democratic colleagues demand extra leftwing goodies in exchange for doing their job and funding our troops. The President's own party does not get to take our national defense hostage and demand rewards.

So I am grateful that our Democratic colleagues backed down and accepted

our position. The bipartisan bill that our colleagues have negotiated equips our Armed Forces with the resources they need while cutting nondefense, nonveterans spending in real dollars.

This is a strong outcome for Republicans and, much more importantly, it is the outcome that our Nation's security actually needs. So I want to thank our distinguished colleague, Senator SHELBY, for his hard work, and I look forward to reviewing the full text soon.

#### TRIBUTE TO RICHARD C. SHELBY

Madam President, I saved my tribute to the most senior retiring Republican Member for late in the year. But even with mere days remaining until the end of his term, our colleague's calendar has been quite packed, not with fancy farewell parties but with a final chapter of high-stakes negotiations and tireless legislative work on behalf of his State, our Nation, and, in particular, our Armed Forces. It is no surprise that Senator RICHARD SHELBY's final days in the Senate see him running through the tape and burning the literal midnight oil.

The State of Alabama has sent some prolific and powerful Senators to this Chamber over its history, but RICHARD SHELBY has surpassed them all. He is not just the longest serving Senator from Alabama. He is the most influential. Our friend is one of the most effective legislators the U.S. Senate has ever seen.

Growing up outside Depression-era Birmingham, RICHARD SHELBY was not automatically predestined for the halls of power. But even before our friend had grown into the fullness of his commanding stature, I understand that young RICHARD SHELBY was never afraid to throw his weight around, whether he was fighting for his team on the football field or putting himself between a classmate and a bully on a streetcar.

As a young man, there was hardly any academic or athletic test that RICHARD didn't pass with flying colors. But the way I hear it, the most important test was ensuring that a pretty girl named Annette was delivered back home in time for curfew after their first date.

Annette was intrigued by this handsome young man, but she also loved and respected her own family. So she declared that if RICHARD was late dropping her off, the first date would be the last. Thus, a partnership for the ages was born.

And ever since the SHELBYs' first campaign victory in 1970, the people of Alabama have had a natural campaigner, a trailblazing problem-solver, and an intellectual giant looking out for their interests. And, in addition to Annette Shelby, they have also gotten RICHARD in the package deal.

Dr. Annette Shelby has charted a historic course of her own here in Washington, including becoming the first woman to hold a tenured professorship at Georgetown's Business School.